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# Rensselaer County Veterans Newsletter

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## NYS Alternative Veterans' Property Tax Exemption

### Alternative Veterans' Exemption - Overview

The alternative exemption provides a property tax exemption of 15% of assessed value to Veterans who served during wartime and an additional 10% to those who served in a combat zone.

The law also provides an additional exemption to disabled Veterans equal to one-half of their service-connected disability ratings. The application form for the alternative exemption is RP-458-a; it must be filed with your local assessor. The alternative exemption is also applicable only to general municipal taxes and not to school taxes or special district levies. Unlike the eligible funds veterans' exemption, however, the alternative exemption is limited to the primary residence (including, at local option, cooperative apartment) of a Veteran, and is not based on eligible funds.

*Eligibility: What does the law mean by a "period of war"?*

The exemption is available to Veterans who served on active duty in the United States Armed Forces during the Persian Gulf Conflict (on or after August 2, 1990); Vietnam war (December 22, 1961- May 7, 1975); Korean war (June 27, 1950—January 31, 1955); World War II (December 7, 1941— December 31, 1946); World War I (April 6, 1917—November 11, 1918); the Mexican Border Period (May 9, 1916—April 5, 1917) or the Spanish-American War (April 21, 1898—July 4, 1902). The dates of the Korean and Vietnam Wars and the Persian Gulf Conflict are prescribed in the State law, while the dates of the other wars are derived from federal law. Also eligible for the exemption are certain individuals who served during World War II in the US Merchant Marines and persons who served overseas in a civilian capacity during World War II either in the American Field Service under the United States Armies and the United States Army Groups or as a flight crew and aviation ground support employee of American Airlines' contract with the Air Transport Command.

*May a veteran who did not serve during a "period of war" qualify for the exemption?*

Yes, a Veteran who is a recipient of an Armed Forces expeditionary medal, a Navy expeditionary medal, a Marine Corps expeditionary medal, or a Global War on Terrorism expeditionary medal may qualify.

*If the qualifying Veteran is deceased, can the alternative exemption still be granted?*

Yes, provided that the title to the property is in the name of the Veteran's unremarried, surviving spouse, who continues to use the home as the primary residence. A Veteran who also is the unremarried surviving spouse of a qualifying Veteran also may receive any exemption to which the deceased spouse entitled. In the event that both husband and wife are deceased, the exemption can be continued for the Veterans' dependent mother, father, child or children under 21 who have legally received the property and who use it as their primary residence.

### Van Transportation...

- \* *Don't drive* and need to get to the Stratton VA Medical Center?
- \* We offer complimentary van transportation to and from the VAMC for **most morning** medical appointments.

For more information please call (518) 270-2760.



### VETERANS CRISIS LINE

1-800-273-8255  
 PRESS 1

\*\*Confidential chat at  
 VeteransCrisisLine.net  
 or text to 838255\*\*  
 TTY service 1-800-799-4889

Confidential support 24  
 hours a day, 7 days a  
 week, 365 days a year,  
 for veterans and their  
 loved ones

## **NYS COLD WAR VETERANS' PROPERTY TAX EXEMPTION** **Cold War Veterans' Exemption—Overview**

### *How does the Cold War Veterans' exemption work?*

The exemption provides a basic property, of either 10 or 15 percent of assessed value (as adopted by the municipality) to Veterans who served during the Cold War period. The law also provides an additional exemption to disabled Veterans, equal to one-half of their service-connected disability ratings. The basic exemption is limited to 10 years, but there is no limit for the disabled portion of this exemption. In both instances, the exemption is limited to the primary residence of the Veteran, and is applicable only to general municipal taxes, not to school taxes or special district levies.

### *Where the Cold War exemption is in effect, does the assessor automatically give the exemption to a Cold War Veteran?*

No. Where the exemption is offered by local option of the municipality, the Veteran must file an application, RP-458-b, with the assessor by "taxable status date". In most towns, this date is March 1, but please check the date with your assessor to be sure. The Veteran must show a discharge or release from the US Armed Forces under Honorable Conditions and that the service was during the Cold War period. If the veteran seeks the additional exemption available under the law, proof must be provided to show a service-connected disability.

### *What type of proof will be accepted?*

Form DD-214, which you should have received upon separation from the service, contains some of the information the assessor needs to determine your eligibility. Other written documentation also may help to prove eligibility, such as a copy of discharge orders, VA documentation for disability rating, etc. You should also have a copy of the deed to the house or other proof that you and/or your spouse are the owners of the property.

### *Where can I get a copy of my Veteran's service records or other information to document my eligibility?*

Check with your local office of the New York State Division of Veterans' Affairs or your County Veterans Service Agency as to how you should proceed.

### *What does the law mean by the "Cold War"?*

The exemption is available to Veterans who served on active duty (exclusive of training) in the United States Armed Forces between September 2, 1945 and December 26, 1991, and who are not currently receiving either the eligible funds or alternative veterans' exemption.

### *What are the ownership requirements of the Cold War exemption?*

The legal title to the property must be in the name of the Veteran or the spouse of the Veteran or both, or the unremarried surviving spouse of the Veteran. If the property is owned by more than one qualified owner, the exemption to which each is entitled may be combined. Also, if a Veteran is the unremarried surviving spouse of a Veteran, that person may also receive any exemption to which the deceased spouse was entitled.

### *What are the residential and occupancy requirements of the law?*

The property must be used exclusively for residential purposes, and must also be the primary residence of a Cold War Veteran or the unremarried spouse of a Cold War Veteran unless that person is absent from the property due to medical reasons or institutionalized for up to five years. If a portion of the property is used for non-residential purposes, the exemption will apply only to that portion of the property that is used exclusively for residential purposes.

### *What are the dollar limits on the Cold War Veterans' exemption?*

Once it decides to put the Cold War exemption into effect (at either 10 or 15 percent of assessed value), each county, city, town and village has the additional option of using the maximum set of exemptions established by State law or passing a local law to use a reduced maximum set of exemptions. The maximums are listed in the instructions for the Cold War Veterans exemption available online or from your assessors office. You should check with your assessor to determine the maximum exemption limits in your municipality.

\*\*\*Rensselaer County Cold War Veterans Exemption is 10%\*\*\*

## A Message from the Veterans Service Agency Director

I hope that you all had a great summer. This is from the American Legion National Commander.

### THAT OTHER VIRUS

There is a virus in America that could cause more long-term destruction than COVID-19. Just as the novel coronavirus can quickly devastate a healthy body this other virus threatens lives, neighborhoods and infrastructures. No person or place is truly safe. It can embed itself inside a peaceful protest and turn it into a nightmare of violent rioting and retribution. It turns Americans against Americans. This virus is called anarchy.

Perhaps no one should be more concerned about this virus than those who justly fight for civil rights and equality. Their cause has been hijacked. George Floyd and Breonna Taylor receive only occasional mentions on the evening news while footage of statue-toppling, tear gas and batons dominates. One network's description of a live event will usually have the opposite perspective of another network. Division is a symptom of this virus and its cancer has reached a stage unseen since the Civil War. The patient is quickly approaching stage 4.

At our 1962 National Convention, American Legion delegates defined "Americanism" in such an eloquent manner that we still adhere to it. It stated that the essence of Americanism is class, religious and racial tolerance. Written as if it were a vaccine against our current anarchy virus, it further states "law and order are essential to the preservation of Americanism while lawlessness and violence are distinctly un-American."

That's worth repeating. "Lawlessness and violence are distinctly un-American." Peaceful protests against racism are just, admirable and constitutionally protected. It's ok if protests make people feel uncomfortable. A good protest is supposed to do that. But many people feel unsafe. This is what distinguishes protestors from anarchists and rioters.

Whether generated from the extreme left or the extreme right, the cracked skulls and burning buildings don't care. They are damaged, sometimes permanently.

Instead of fighting this virus like good scientists, public officials are failing us. People are being killed while local, state and federal agencies fight over jurisdiction. Add partisan politics to the growing list of symptoms.

Most police officers are brave and honorable. Some are not and those who abuse their positions should be held accountable. In the fog of a riot, it is sometimes difficult for officers to distinguish between a peaceful protestor and a violent anarchist. Again, police officers who commit crimes should be prosecuted. Same with a brick-throwing anarchist.

Federal agents are charged with enforcing federal law and protecting federal property. State and local law enforcement officers have parallel responsibilities in their respective areas. Mayors, governors and the federal government must work as one when it comes to public safety. Agencies at every level must collaborate. People are dying. The enemy is not each other. It's the violent anarchist. Unity is the cure.

By American Legion National Commander James "Bill" Oxford, Jul 23, 2020

We should all take this message to heart. Enjoy your Fall amid COVID-19.

Yours in Patriotism,

*Peter K. Goebel*

# COVID-19 Updates *Changes to the Flu Clinic for 2020*

Due to the COVID19 pandemic this year's  
Flu clinic will NOT be Walk-In Based.

The Flu clinic will be on the First (1<sup>st</sup>) floor  
and by *SCHEDULED* appointments only.

You can begin scheduling your Flu Shot on Monday  
September 21st by calling  
518-626-PACT(7228).

*This is an important change to be aware of historically many Veterans  
"Walk In" for their Flu shots, particularly at the beginning of Flu  
Season*

## Upcoming Events...



Call our office to inquiry about listing your event

September 7th...*LABOR DAY- OFFICE CLOSED*

September 14th...Honor-a-Deceased Veteran Ceremony in the Legislative Chambers, 8:15 a.m.,

*POSTPONED*

October 12th...*COLUMBUS DAY-OFFICE CLOSED*

October 13th...Honor-a-Deceased Veteran Ceremony in the Legislative Chambers, 8:15 a.m.,

*Nathan J. Snyder-USA, SPC-Afghanistan- Tentatively*

November 3rd...*ELECTION DAY-OFFICE CLOSED*

November 11th...*VETERANS DAY- OFFICE CLOSED*

## RETURN THE F.A.V.O.R. VETERAN DISCOUNT PROGRAM

### ARE YOU ELIGIBLE?

Eligibility for the Rensselaer County Veterans' Discount Program is for Veterans or the widows/widowers of Veterans.

Eligibility for a Veterans ID Card is dependent on being an honorably discharged Veteran of the United States Military.

The Veteran or widow/widower MUST apply for the card in person.

Receipt of the Veterans FAVOR card is dependent on the Veteran or widow/widower's filing of an original Discharge (DD-214 / Report of Separation) at the Rensselaer County Clerk's Office.

### WHERE DO I APPLY?

Rensselaer County Clerk's Office  
105 Third Street  
Troy, NY 12180  
(518) 270-4080